DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 051 957 RC 005 387

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TITLE The Attitudes and Beliefs of Teachers Concerning the Education of American Indian Children in the Southwest. American Indian Education Papers, No. 1.
INSTITUTION Arizona Univ., Tuscon. Dept. of Anthropology.
PUB DATE Mar 70
NOTE 20p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *American Indians, *Educational Problems, *Interviews, Parent Participation, *Student Characteristics, *Teacher Attitudes, Teacher Characteristics, Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

Interviews with 15 groups of teachers in Arizona and New Mexico, representing 10 schools serving predominantly Indian children on or near the periphery of Indian reservations, are summarized in this report. Major areas discussed are teacher attitudes toward methods of teaching Indian students and toward Indian control of schools, as well as teacher beliefs concerning characteristics of (1) Indian students, (2) Indian parents, and (3) teachers of Indian children. Major problems identified by teachers are the lack of competence in English among Indian students and the lack of parental interest in the schools. It is concluded that the education of American Indian children in the Southwest is rigid and inflexible, that classrooms are almost totally lacking in local materials, and that schools seem unwilling to make any concessions to enlist the enthusiasm or interest of the Indian community in the education of their children. (JH)

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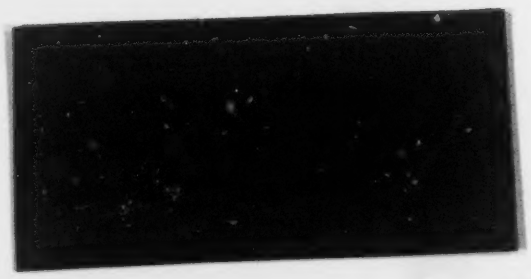
THE ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS OF TEACHERS CONCERNING THE EDUCATION OF AMERICAN INDIAN CHILDREN IN THE SOUTHWEST

Waldron P. Smith



American Indian Education Papers No. 1, March, 1970

CO053871

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INTRODUCTION

Within a few years there will be a quarter of a million American Indian children enrolled in elementary and secondary schools within the United States. Almost half of this student population will be located in the Southwest. Undoubtedly, teacher attitudes about Indians will have an important effect upon these children. One aspect of the National Study of American Indian Education was to discern teacher attitudes and beliefs about the education of American Indian children. This paper is a summary of interviews with fifteen groups of teachers in Arizona and New Mexico representing ten schools which served predominantly Indian children on or near the periphery of Indian reservations. (See Appendix A) The students were primarily members of the Papago, Pima, Apache, Hopi, Navajo, Hualapai, Havasupai, Laguna and Acoma tribes.

I

Design of the Study

Ten school-communities in the Southwest were selected for intensive study as one phase of the National Study of American Indian Education. The school-communities were selected on the basis of their location; interior of a reservation or off reservation, and the source of control of the school; federal or local.

A random sample of ten teachers from each school was interviewed as to their perception of problems related to educating American Indian children. To augment these individual interviews, it was decided to interview all the teachers in each school by means of a group interview. The probes in the group interview paralleled in general the questions of the individual interview. If the school faculty was greater than 20 teachers, it was subdivided to provide groups of no larger than 15 teachers for each group interview.

Each group interview was tape-recorded and later analyzed in terms of the major categories which were mentioned by the teachers. For the most part, once the group interview began, there was little need for additional probes on the part of Mr. Smith. The teachers on their own initiative concurred with the research project as to what constituted the major areas of significance in educating American Indian children.

A group interview suffers from the difficulty in quantifying the data since some teachers may concur with one or more of the more vocal members of the group, yet not speak out. The group interview, on the other hand, has some features which make it very useful as a research technique. One of these is that the speaker can remain completely anonymous. Another is that as the group begins to speak out, the members are encouraged to talk about topics which may remain unsaid in an individual interview, either through the encouragement provided by the group process or the recollection of topics which may not have been remembered during the individual interview. Finally, the group interview provides a self-correcting process wherein one teacher's views can be evaluated by other teachers in the group. On several occasions, for example, a member of the group would make a statement about Indian children which was criticized by other members of the teacher group.

The results of the teacher group interviews, therefore, provide an excellent summary of teacher views on educating American Indian youth in the Southwest.

II

BELIEFS CONCERNING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS

The interviews began with general opening questions such as, "What are Indian students like?" and "Do they differ from other pupils that you have known?" The teachers felt that Indian children were quite different from middle class Anglo children. They talked about Indian children as being more reticent, shy, and reluctant to ask questions or to recite individually. The teachers felt that the children were especially reluctant to try anything new for the first time. In the beginning of the year many children would not answer the roll call. The teachers attributed this to different causes such as lack of confidence, shyness, fear of public mistakes, lack of competitiveness, laziness, lack of interest or motivation, distrust of Anglo teachers or downright hostility. The teachers also expressed a belief that the children did not have a vocabulary that was adequate for real self-expression.

A concern was expressed that Indian children were lacking in imagination and the ability to handle abstract concepts.

Perhaps as a result of this the Indian children oftentimes would help one another by sharing answers and prompting by other Indian children in the class. Whenever an Indian child was asked to recite or read aloud in front of the class he would count on some assistance from the peer group. The recitation thereupon became a group rather than an individual effort.

Many of the children were noticeably behind in school. The fourth grade seemed to be the critical stage beyond which many of the children began to withdraw. It was suggested that the school materials become noticeably harder at this point, that vocabulary became much more of a problem and that as the students fell behind in reading, they fell behind in all of their studies. By the eighth or ninth grade the average student was reading three to four years below grade level. By high school there was oftentimes four to five years' spread in students' classroom achievement.

The teachers indicated that children from families who spoke English at home tended to perform better in class. Usually it was the use of English by older siblings, sometimes by parents and other adults, that proved helpful. The location of the child's home also was considered important. Children from more remote areas of the reservation seemed not to perform as well in school compared to children from the more accessible, urbanized parts of the reservation or its periphery. Children who received their early education off reservation in a public school someplace seemed to be the best performers according to the teachers.

The teachers said that there was a direct relationship between the parents' level of education and their children's performance in school. The degree of parental acculturation to Anglo society was cited as a major factor. In other words, children from the more Anglicized families were regarded as superior students. The teachers involved in coaching said that the students who were most willing to compete on the athletic field were the best achievers in the classroom. They usually attributed this increased competitiveness to being more Anglicized. The teachers in general agreed that the children needed better "self-concepts."

The teachers felt that most students returned after graduation to their reservations where they were unemployed. Usually there was very little in the way of follow-up information, which might be useful in designing curricula for succeeding classes.

It would appear from these statements that those teachers who spoke out during the group interview did possess a mental picture which they were using as the basis for their teaching. The accuracy of this mental picture needs to be verified through actual observation of classroom behavior. (Another paper in this series will compare teacher statements made during the group interview with those made during the individual interviews, and with the observations made of classrooms.)

The teachers seemed to both like and dislike the quietness of Indian children at the same time. While they cited reluctance to speak in class as a major problem, they felt that this was one of the more desirable features about teaching Indian children. Quiet, unresponsive children provided few behavior problems. When the children did not speak, it was often comfortable for both the teacher and the child. Some teachers expressed a concern that the school actually taught the children to be dumb and quiet. This was mentioned several times in conjunction with classes that were subdivided into slow and accelerated groups. The slow groups always knew that they were considered to be less bright and they lived up to expectations. There is a good possibility that teacher expectations regarding student potential has a major impact upon classroom performance.

The teachers expected the more Anglicized children to be the better performers in class. They rarely disappointed their teachers. The cause may be more attention and encouragement by the teacher, rather than native ability. Similarly the accelerated classes were comprised of the more Anglicized or "progressive" students. Based upon what is known about probability and inferential statistics, it seems unlikely that the students speaking one language as opposed to another, have markedly different

distributions of intelligence. In fact, the advisors to the high school honor societies noted that many of their honors students were from "traditional" pueblo families (Hopi, Acoma). It may be suggested that teacher expectations regarding student abilities has a marked effect on student achievement. Children from the less Anglicized families are therefore at a great disadvantage in this regard.

The less Anglicized Indian students seemed to represent somewhat of a mystery and unsettling influence upon teachers. In general, they felt pessimistic that anything could be done with these children. Undoubtedly this attitude is communicated to the children.

III

BELIEFS CONCERNING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AMERICAN INDIAN PARENTS

In general, the teachers see very little of the Indian parents. It was a rare occasion when an Indian parent visited a school. Teachers could cite in detail the one parent visit to their classroom during the previous year. In some cases it was clear that parents were unaware of their child's grade in school, teacher's name, etc. The main occasion for parental visits was in response to a summons by the school principal. Usually, their child was about to be suspended for some behavioral infraction. There were a few occasions when parents en masse would attend a school athletic or social event (i.e., basketball game, Indian dances). At these events parents usually sat in one section, teachers in another. Very little communication between parents and teachers resulted.

The school seemed to be an alien place for Indian parents. Some teachers felt that this was because parents were embarrassed by their lack of education, inability to speak English, or were ashamed of their clothes. Many teachers felt that the parents were indifferent towards school or perhaps hostile.

The teachers indicated that institutionalized styles of school-parent contacts such as PTA meetings had been attempted, but with little success. Usually the more educated, more Anglicized parents would attend these functions, but the parents of the children who were experiencing the most difficulty in school would not attend. In general, the teachers felt that these meetings would not be successful until the next generation of parents.

The occasions were even fewer when the teachers visited the parents. There were a few exceptions to this general rule, however. A few longer service teachers

seemed more knowledgeable about the local Indian community. The coaches who were required to perform bus services with their personal automobiles, saw the children's homes and families. They were rarely invited inside the homes, however.

Most teachers lived in compounds separated from the larger Indian community. In some communities public school teachers lived in one compound, BIA employees in another, Public Health Service people in another and so on.

One school tried to bridge the gap between parents and the school by hiring a bus to take the teachers on a field trip to the Navajo reservation. The teachers would arrive unannounced in the bus with their cameras, and the parents would go inside the Hogan and not come out until after they left. The program was discontinued.

The teachers said that most Indian parents had no real interest in formal education for their children. Attendance was required by law, but the education at school often was not seen as meaningful. The teachers felt that many parents in fact were hostile toward the school and saw it as an attempt to destroy the tribe's cultural heritage. These parents discouraged the use of English at home.

The more educated parents seemed to take the most interest in education. These were the few parents who showed up for school events, had cars, read newspapers and magazines, lived in the more urbanized areas of the reservation and spoke English at home. The teachers reported that the children from these families performed best in school. The teachers said that they could communicate best with the children of these parents.

The teachers felt that there was a considerable amount of social disorganization in some of the Indian communities. They felt that the parents often left on drinking sprees when the welfare checks arrived. The teachers often felt that the parents were unable or unwilling to discipline their children. They abdicated from this responsibility and felt that the school should do it. The teachers also stated that the parents were unable to provide any vocational or education guidance for their children.

In summary, the statements made by most teachers about the parents of Indian children, indicated that the teachers' mental picture of Indian parents was extremely negative. In view of the fact that so few of the teachers had much contact with the Indian community, one might raise the question "On what evidence is the teacher impression of Indian parents based?" It would appear that the teachers, few of whom were Indian themselves, were projecting the failure of the school onto the Indian parent. To suggest, for example, that Indian parents do not visit the school because they are ashamed of their clothing, may be projecting an Anglo middle-class value

orientation with respect to what constitutes proper attire, onto an Indian population which possesses another value as to what constitutes proper attire. Thus two factors appear to be operating in respect to teacher statements about Indian parents; first, the statements are based upon little experience with Indian parents in the parents' own locale; second, the statements tend to project the teacher's value orientation upon the parents' behavior. (Another paper in this series will compare the teacher perception of the causes of the lack of involvement in school affairs by Indian parents with the statements by the parents themselves as to why they have not become involved.)

IV

BELIEFS CONCERNING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TEACHERS OF AMERICAN INDIAN CHILDREN

The teachers felt that Indian children preferred kind, patient teachers. The teachers referred to patience as the primary attribute required for educating Indian children. Rapport or lack of it was also a major concern of the teachers. It seemed to take time for Indian children to develop confidence and trust in their teachers. Since there is a high mobility among discouraged teachers, this rapport often does not have time to develop. Many beginning students arrived speaking no English and afraid of school. Some teachers seemed equally awkward with their new charges. A number of teachers expressed concern over the violation of tribal social taboos and experienced what might be referred to as "culture shock."

The teachers offered a variety of reasons for seeking employment in an Indian school. Some teachers said they experienced discrimination when looking for a job so they came west for better employment opportunities. Several Indian teachers said that they would have preferred to teach on their own reservation but that there was a Bureau of Indian Affairs Policy against this. A number of teachers were former Peace Corps and Vista Volunteers. Most teachers, however, indicated that they accepted their current teaching position by happenstance. Very few teachers had any special preparation for teaching Indian children.

The teachers discussed what they felt to be the reasons for the high teacher mobility. Isolation from the mainstream of society seemed to be a major cause. Stores, shopping and sometimes medical facilities were far removed from their homes. Some locations did not have television reception. Unmarried teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of social life. A number of teachers felt that their

housing was undesirable, while some of the married teachers missed the opportunity to own their own home. Their living conditions, rather than school organization, or the nature of the students, were the major cause of teachers leaving their positions.

Although the teachers did not suggest any specific remedies for the selection, training, and retention of teachers in schools serving predominantly Indian children, their descriptions and complaints do provide a basis for making some recommendations.

First, teachers selected to teach in these schools should exhibit considerable sophistication in those interpersonal relationships which contribute to patience, kindness, and trust.

Second, special programs for recruiting teachers should be developed. Ideally, the teachers should be recruited during the period of their professional training so as to provide some experience in accommodating the special needs of Indian children as well as a familiarity with the Indian community in which they will be teaching.

If experienced teachers are to be recruited, they should be provided some specialized training prior to or immediately following their employment. Part of this training might include some "sensitivity training." It might also be wise to include some orientation or training by Indian community leaders as to what they feel the teachers need to know prior to working with their children.

Finally, some arrangements need to be made so that the teachers have a more natural situation in which to conduct their personal lives. They should be leased land or be able to purchase land in the community in order to build or lease their own home just as in any other community. Attempts should be made to employ as teachers, people from the local area who may be more likely to remain in the area. In the case of those areas where the adults have not been able to acquire higher education, special programs to recruit and train adults as teachers should be initiated.

V

ATTITUDES TOWARD METHODS OF TEACHING AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS

Many of the teachers said that all classes of Indian students should be considered special education. There was a decided emphasis upon remedial instruction. When class sizes exceed 15-20, the teachers felt that they lost some of the children (most classes in actuality exceeded this desired size). The teachers saw more teachers, fewer students as an almost universal solution for poor academic achievement.

The teachers felt that more field trips and extra-curricular experiences were needed to bridge the gap between the students home environments and the material in their textbooks. (They rarely felt that textbooks should be changed to more closely approximate the children's surroundings and experiences.) The standard textbooks for each grade were inappropriate, since most children were reading below their grade level. A common solution to this was to have individual students reading in different grade level books. Many classes were in effect one-room school houses, with subgroups scattered around working at different levels of reading.

The teachers often experienced frustration at the children's unwillingness to respond individually. The teachers were divided as to the cause of this. Some felt that many of their students were unable to respond because of an inadequate vocabulary. These teachers emphasized vocabulary building. Other teachers felt that the children did not like to stand out as individuals. These teachers tried to elicit responses from the total group instead. A common practice was to call on the more verbal students as a check on class comprehension of instructions.

The teachers often felt that Indian students were good memorizers but learned things in isolated bits and pieces. They felt that Indian students were uncreative and somewhat deficient in problem-solving skills. At this point the teachers usually divided into two groups. Some felt that more structure and drill was the answer. The others felt that the teacher should do things to integrate the material and teach problem solving. The teachers said that the students should be taught to be more aggressive and verbal.

The teachers indicated that they had an unusually large number of retarded children in their classes. The back row was often filled with these children. They felt unable to do much with these children, but appreciated that they were quiet.

Patience and individual attention were most often mentioned as desirable teaching methods. Most teachers felt that given enough of each, many children would raise their academic achievement. Virtually no teachers felt that they were able to provide this patience and individual attention due to the sizes of their classes.

The major solution for developing teaching methods to accommodate the special needs of Indian children was not the development of new and different methods but rather a change in the organization of the school so as to produce a low teacher-student ratio. The Indian child, therefore, was still to accommodate to the teaching methods, rather than changing any of the teaching methods to accommodate to the needs of the Indian child.

It may not be surprising, then, to note that although the language barrier was indicated in Section II as one of the major problems of Indian children, not a single school had any special program in bilingualism or teaching English as a second language, nor did any of the teachers mention the use of such teaching procedures.

Nor was there any suggestion that the content of the current program should be altered in any way to incorporate the content of the local Indian community.

VI

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CONTROL OF THE SCHOOLS

All of the public schools of course had a Board of Education. Two of the Bureau of Indian Affairs schools had made some attempt at establishing an Advisory Board.

The teachers suggested that the influence of the School Boards varied greatly. There was one Board of Education that seemed to exercise power in the usual sense. The public school that served one Indian community involved in the study was located thirty miles away from the center of the school district. It was one of eight schools in the school system and had no representation from the area served by the School Board. The teachers felt that their school was the orphan of the school system. The composition of the School Board was all Anglo.

Another public school had the local trader (Anglo) as its President. Since some of the Indian membership on the Board were his debtors at the trading post it was hard to imagine them out voting him. The President usually deferred to the school principal.

A third public school Board was comprised of the local trader (Anglo) as president, two BIA employees and two Indians. Only one of these Indians was active on the Board. The Superintendent of Schools seemed to be the real power.

The other public school Board had five Indian members. The teachers felt that this Board would be influential someday, but that day clearly had not arrived yet. The principal seemed firmly in charge.

One BIA school had an Advisory Board, which was originally appointed through the offices of the BIA. This Board was subsequently elected by a meager voter turnout.

Most of the members were illiterate. As of last report it was primarily a beginners reading class with the Principal as the teacher. The BIA meanwhile had

prepared some guidelines for the Board members when they are prepared to assume some responsibility.

One boarding school sent invitations to members of the various tribes sending children to the school, to send an Advisory Board member to meetings. One man who had come to the first two meetings was appointed President of the Board by the School Superintendent. The duties of this Board seemed purely advisory.

According to the teachers, the schools were controlled by their administrators. None felt that there was any Indian control over school policy. This view coincides with the teacher sentiment that few Indian parents are either involved in or concerned about the school their child attends, and that until the parents become involved in the school there will be little Indian involvement in the control of the school.

The teachers neither offered any solution to this problem nor exhibited any desire to develop Indian control over the schools.

VII

THE IDEAL SCHOOL FOR INDIAN CHILDREN AS VIEWED BY TEACHERS

The immediate response elicited from teachers as to what an ideal school for Indian children might be like was the desire to have more money to run them better. They wanted better physical facilities, better housing, more classrooms, more teachers, counselors, special education specialists, libraries, remedial reading specialists, music and art teachers, teacher's aides, recreation facilities, gyms, auditoriums, sewing machines, refrigerators, etc.

The teachers felt that a more effective job could be done with smaller classes and a more favorable student-teacher ratio. This coincides with their views of Indian Education as primarily remedial-special education. Some interest was expressed in ungraded elementary schools.

A considerable amount of interest was expressed about increased vocational instruction for Indian children to enable them to get jobs. It was stressed that this vocational training must be related to job opportunities in the area. Some teachers felt that high school students should be prepared for relocation. Such training would combine vocational training with how to live in an urban environment. The teachers felt that the schools should emphasize vocational counseling, career

days, and field trips to factories, offices, and stores. A number of teachers felt that the tribes must encourage industry on the reservation to make education seem meaningful and job related.

The teachers expressed dissatisfaction with dormitory living for students. The dormitories were commonly referred to as "cattle barns." It was suggested that students should live in smaller, more family-like groups rather than thirty packed into a room. Some teachers wanted to do away with separate Indian schools altogether. These teachers urged closing down the Indian schools and retaining the dormitories only when necessary. Some teachers suggested using the current Indian schools for remedial instruction prior to entry into public schools.

A common concern expressed by teachers was that they really didn't know what the goals of the school were: "What are we really trying to do with these children anyhow?" Many teachers felt that the goal was to Anglicize the Indians to adjust to the modern world. This was sometimes expressed as "to give them the same education and opportunities as everyone else," sometimes "to teach them to be more flexible and less rigid." Some felt that the goals were to bring the Indians up to "the social standard." Few teachers felt that the Indian parents should be asked what they wanted for their children. Most teachers felt little obligation to make concessions to the Indian culture. The teaching of English, and by implication, Anglo values and behaviors were often seen as major purposes for education.

The teachers maintained that they had no real part in the decision-making process. They felt more like employees than professionals. The BIA teachers felt that they should only work a nine-month year similar to teachers in the public schools.

The teachers suggested that their chances of educational success with their students were limited by lack of parental interest and involvement in education. Suggestions were offered to buy buses to transport parents to the school house for Adult Education (mostly vocational) and to make the school more of a community center. Most suggestions involved ways to change Indian parents to be more amenable to the school program rather than to change the program to fit the wishes of the parents.

The teachers talked about the impact of television on their students. They felt that television helped narrow the environment-experience gap between Indian and Anglo. They indicated that the addition of television in the homes of their students made it much easier to teach in recent years. Some suggested government subsidation of television on the reservations.

It is interesting to note, that for the most part the teacher's concept of an ideal school for Indian children was essentially similar to the existing school, only with a better economic base. Few fundamental, really qualitative changes were suggested. To be sure, a few imaginative teachers suggested some unique approaches such as educational television for the reservation, and a few others were concerned about the goal of the school (a decision which needs to be made before any program can be developed), but few of the teachers revealed any knowledge of the fundamental changes which the research in Indian education suggests must occur before an effective program can be developed or the innovations in teaching Indian children which have been incorporated in some school programs in the United States and Canada.

CONCLUSIONS

Spoken and written English appear to be a key problem in the education of American Indian students in the Southwest. Without competence in English, young Indians are ill-equipped to progress educationally. Unfortunately, traditional methods of teaching English have not been up to the task. Few teachers, however, were aware of new approaches, such as teaching English as a Second Language.

Time and again, the teachers were able to identify key problems in the education of Indian students. They usually concluded that someone else should do something about it. The teachers regularly felt that students and administrators were unimaginative and non-innovative. They seemed to suffer the same malaise. An air of defeatism seemed to permeate most of the schools in this study.

Several teachers considered the student's progress to be interrelated with the attitudes of their teachers. This was an apt observation. The students are not alone in lacking confidence in their abilities.

Lack of parental interest in the schools was considered another major problem. The more traditional Indians felt that the school's intention was to take their children away from them and make them imitation White men. The parents' assessment was quite correct. The more acculturated parents seemed more interested in the schools, but there was no real place for them. It was quite clear that the teachers did not feel that they were competent to assume any meaningful responsibility.

Many parents and students seemed to feel that much of the school program was meaningless to them. There was a good basis for that judgement. Much of the curriculum is meaningless to life on the reservation. Vocational training does not have much relationship to job opportunities.

One sweeping generalization that can be made about the education of American Indian children in the Southwest is that it is rigid and inflexible. Classrooms were almost totally lacking in any local materials. The schools seem unwilling to make any concessions whatever to enlist the enthusiasm or interest of the Indian community in the education of their children.

It would seem that the typical middle-class school has been reproduced on the reservation, minus the typical middle-class students. Indian education seems to be a field in which the customer is always wrong.

APPENDIX A

TEACHER SAMPLE[1]

	Type of School	Tribes	Number of Teachers	Ethnic Background of Teachers				
				Anglo	Negro	Indian	Mexican-American	Chinese-American
1. School District 116	Public Elementary & Secondary	Papago	20	19	-	1	-	-
2. School District 116	Public Elemenatry	Papago	8	6	1	1	-	-
3. School District 117	BIA Elementary	Pima	8	4	3	-	1	-
4. School District 118	Public Elementary & Secondary	Apache	22	22	-	-	-	-
5. School District 119	BIA Elementary	Apache	6	5	1	-	-	-
6. School District 121	BIA Secondary	Mixed	26	21	4	-	1	-
7. School District 120	BIA Elementary	Mixed	10	5	2	3	-	-
8. School District 125	BIA Elementary	Hopi	8	1	2	4	-	1
9. School District 124	Public Secondary	Laguna-Acoma	24	23	-	-	1	-
10. School District 123	Public Secondary	Navajo	16	15	-	1	-	-

[1]Teacher group interviews were conducted on location between October 14, 1968 and April 25, 1969.

APPENDIX B

NATIONAL STUDY OF AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION

TEACHER GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE
(Tape-Recorded)

Third Revised Copy
Smith
2/24/69

Instructions

The purpose of this section of the school study is to elicit from the teaching staff through the process of group dynamics their perception of American Indians, American Indian students, and the role of the school in American Indian education. The role of the interviewer in this situation is to provide as little structure to the group interview as possible, permitting the conversation to flow freely from one teacher to another. It is much better for the teachers to initiate the discussion rather than the interviewer and for the teacher to react to each others' statements. The situations described below are to be used to initiate conversation only when necessary. In some instances it may be equally as important to know what teachers do not perceive as important to Indian education as that which they consider important.

Ideally, the group would consist of ten to twelve teachers. No administrator or counselor should be included in the teacher group. Should a school be large enough to have a group of administrators and counselors, then this group should be interviewed much in the same manner as the teacher group.

It is suggested that the group discussion be scheduled during a period of free time when the teachers are not pressured to meet school or personal obligations. The end of the school day may prove to be an appropriate time. It is desirable that no time limit be set and that the group discussion be as relaxing and as much fun as possible.

Directions: Introduce yourself to the group and then explain that part of the School Study is to permit the teachers to discuss as a group some of the problems and successes of educating American Indians. Use the following major categories to initiate discussion. Specific questions in each category may be used to help the discussion as well.

A. Characteristics of Indian Children

What are Indian students like?

How do American Indian pupils differ from other pupils whom you have known? Do Indian children have unusual language problems?

Do you know of any American Indian children who have been especially successful in school? Describe the child and indicate why he (she) was successful. How would you describe the unsuccessful child?

Is there a peer group among Indian children? Does the peer group influence student behavior in the classroom and social activities of Indian students? How?

B. Characteristics of Indian Parents

How do Indian and non-Indian parents differ?

What are the parents and other Indian adults like? Can you describe some of their living conditions, their behavior, their attitudes toward education, etc.?

Do Indian parents visit the school? What are the occasions for these visits?

Do occasions ever arise when teachers have a chance to visit Indian homes? What are the occasions? What is their reaction to your visits?

What are your views concerning the generally accepted assumption that parents are in great part responsible for the educational deprivation of their children?

C. Characteristics of Teachers of Indian Children

What do you think American Indian children believe is a good teacher?

Are there any special qualifications which a teacher of American Indian children should possess? What are they?

Why did you take a job teaching Indian children?

D. Characteristics of Methods of Teaching Indian Children

Suppose you discovered one or more of your Indian students are not keeping up with the others academically. What measures would you take to find the basic reasons for this, and how would you try to help the student(s)?

Besides teaching the basic subjects, is it also necessary to develop the personality and social skills of Indian students? If so, how do you accomplish this?

E. Control of the Schools

Who is most influential in developing programs for American Indian children? Who should be most influential? Why? Do you think more Indians should be serving on the Board of Education?

F. The Ideal School

If you could create an ideal school to educate American Indian children, what would it be like?

Are the school officials responsive to teachers who might want to try innovations which might be helpful in teaching Indian children?

What do you feel should be some goals for educating American Indian children? Why? What needs to be changed to meet these goals?